United Nations A/65/84–E/2010/90

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
3 June 2010

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session
Item 13 of the preliminary list*
Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2010
New York, 28 June-23 July 2010
Items 4, 6, 8 and 13 of the provisional agenda**

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2009 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265

Economic and environmental questions

Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is prepared as an update to last year's report of the Secretary-General (A/64/87-E/2009/89), which provided an in-depth assessment of the various linkages among the different parts of the integrated follow-up architecture.

* A/65/50.
** E/2010/100.

10-38801 (E) 220610

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The report illustrates recent developments in the integrated follow-up to conferences and also describes recent efforts to streamline the programme of work of the Council at its substantive session in order to avoid overlap and duplication between the segments and makes suggestions for further streamlining.

The report emphasizes that, given the important integrated substantive review now being pursued under the annual ministerial review process, the annual report on the integrated follow-up needs to be reconsidered for the future. The Council may wish to review the scope and periodicity of the report in connection with the review by the General Assembly of resolution 61/16 on strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, which will be reviewed by the Assembly at its upcoming sixty-fifth session.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/29, in which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including recommendations on the periodicity of future reports.

2. The report is prepared as an update to the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/64/87-E/2009/89), which described the underlying approach of the integrated follow-up to conferences and reviewed the evolution of the conference follow-up architecture. Since the comprehensive overview presented in that report remains valid, the current report highlights key developments that have occurred since June 2009. It concludes with a section devoted to recommendations.

II. Recent developments in the integrated follow-up to conferences

A. High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

3. The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s resulted in the emergence of a global consensus on a shared vision of development. This broad-based framework culminated in the adoption, at the Millennium Summit in 2000, of the Millennium Development Goals, a series of time-bound goals and targets summarizing the commitments made at the world conferences and summits.

4. Since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General, a major focus of Member States and the United Nations system has been on the preparations for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, to be held from 20 to 22 September 2010, which will focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, taking into account the progress made with regard to the internationally agreed development goals. The high-level meeting will offer an opportunity to galvanize commitment, rally support and spur collective action to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

5. Several reports and publications have been prepared by entities of the United Nations system to review progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including best practices and lessons learned, and to identify remaining obstacles and gaps, and challenges and opportunities, including from a regional perspective, and which contain recommendations for future action. By May 2010, at the time the present report was prepared, the following reports had been issued, in addition to several other reports expected in advance of the High-level Plenary Meeting:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015" (A/64/665);

(b) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, *Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*;

(c) World Bank report, *World Development Indicators 2010*;

(d) World Bank and International Monetary Fund, *Global Monitoring Report 2010: The MDGs after the Crisis*;

(e) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals" (E/2010/4-E/CN.6/2010/2);

(f) Joint report by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UNDP and the Asian Development Bank, entitled *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an Era of Global Uncertainty: Asia-Pacific Regional Report 2009/10* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.F.10);

(g) Report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) "Millennium Development Goals: advances in environmentally sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean", prepared in collaboration with agencies of the United Nations system;

(h) Report by ESCAP entitled *Financing an Inclusive and Green Future: a Supportive Financial System and Green Growth for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific* (Sales No. E.10.II.F.4, see also E/ESCAP/66/26).

B. Follow-up at the country level

6. Over the past few years, the United Nations system organizations have progressively strengthened their support to integrated conference follow-up at the country level. To promote a more coordinated United Nations country team response to national priorities, a number of tools have been developed, such as common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the results matrix, the DevInfo database and the United Nations Development Group Policy Network. New guidelines under the Framework were issued in January 2010 to assist some 75 countries that are expected to be rolling out preparations for new Frameworks during 2010 and 2011.

7. In accordance with the initiatives of the Secretary-General on improving system-wide coherence, "Delivering as one" was launched in 2006, with eight programme countries voluntarily undertaking to pilot this initiative to better support countries in the implementation of their comprehensive national development strategies and to identify ways in which the United Nations family can deliver in a more integrated and coordinated manner at the country level. In June 2010, a high-level tripartite conference entitled "Delivering as one: lessons from country-led evaluations and way forward", will be held in Hanoi, Government representatives from the eight programme pilot countries and other countries voluntarily adopting the "Delivering as one" approach, United Nations organizations and donor countries will share lessons emerging from country-led evaluations of the "Delivering as one" approach and identify further actions required to enhance, deepen and expand the approach in the countries voluntarily adopting it.

C. Follow-up at the intergovernmental level

1. Annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council

8. The 2005 World Summit reaffirmed that the Economic and Social Council, the principal body for coordination, policy review and policy dialogue, should oversee the implementation of the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals, by holding annual ministerial-level substantive reviews to assess progress. Since its establishment, the annual ministerial review has become an effective tool for the Council to coherently review specific cross-cutting themes common to the major conferences and summits and to fulfil its overall responsibilities in integrated conference follow-up. This year, the annual ministerial review will focus on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women". By 2011, following that year's review, on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education", the review is expected to have covered virtually all of the Millennium Development Goals.

9. The annual ministerial review has benefited from the national experiences shared by 21 Member States that have thus far given national voluntary presentations on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.[1] A key part of the reviews, these voluntary presentations contribute to efforts by the international community to advance the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, since they provide unique opportunities for the volunteering countries to present how global priorities can be translated into action at the national level and share their experiences and best practices.

10. The annual ministerial review successfully captures a regional perspective in global deliberations. In the lead-up to the reviews, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has organized, together with the regional commissions, multi-stakeholder regional meetings to highlight issues of particular concern in the various regions. In preparation for the 2010 review, a regional preparatory meeting on the theme "Women and health" was held on 12 and 13 January 2010 in Dakar. The meeting was hosted by the Government of Senegal, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

11. The biennial Development Cooperation Forum examines the full spectrum of development cooperation, including aid quantity, allocation across countries and sectors, the quality of development cooperation, accountability and transparency. The Forum brings together all relevant stakeholders in development cooperation, including parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the private sector, and also provides an important opportunity to enhance and include the voice and participation of developing countries in discussions relating to the international aid architecture. In 2010, the Forum will discuss ways to increase and improve international development cooperation to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, in particular, Goal 8 on global partnership for

[1] By the end of the high-level segment of the 2010 substantive session of the Council (28 June-2 July 2010), a total of 34 countries will have made a national voluntary presentation.

development. As such, the Forum is also expected to make an important contribution to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September.

2. Functional commissions

12. In 2010, the work of many of the functional commissions is related to key issues on the United Nations development agenda. The fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women undertook a 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The session focused on the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals. The outcome of the review will also feed into the 2010 annual ministerial review. The forty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development provided a continuation for the 2009 annual ministerial review as it focused on the themes of health, morbidity, mortality and development. In addition, the outcomes of that session are highly relevant to the consideration of the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

3. Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

13. In its resolution 2009/30, the Council recommended a more effective intergovernmental review mechanism for carrying out the financing for development follow-up endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/193. Pursuant to the resolution, the Council held its 2010 spring meeting on 18 and 19 March on the overall theme "Building on Monterrey and Doha: towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals". Thematic debates were held on resource mobilization, support to countries in special need, and policy coherence.

III. Civil society and private sector participation

14. The past 15 years have witnessed a substantial increase in the involvement of civil society and business representatives in United Nations conferences and summits that has energized the intergovernmental process and strengthened engagement in the implementation of conference outcomes.

15. For the past three years, the Council has organized special high-level events on key items on the Millennium Development Goals agenda. These dialogues have focused on issues ranging from smart philanthropy and public-private partnerships for sustainable development to global public health, women's empowerment and gender equality. These high-level events, which are linked to International Corporate Philanthropy Day, were organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Office for Partnerships in collaboration with the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, and have involved key United Nations system partners, including WHO and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

16. These events provide a platform to discuss the role of philanthropy and trigger new public-private partnerships for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Specific topics are chosen each year in accordance with the themes of the annual ministerial review. In 2010, the themes of the event were the economic empowerment of women and ending violence against women and girls.

17. In order to provide input to the preparatory process for the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly, in its resolution 64/184, requested its President to organize two days of informal interactive hearings with non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector to provide an input to the preparatory process for the Meeting. The summary of the hearings will be issued as a document of the Assembly prior to the High-level Plenary Meeting.

18. The hearings, to be presided over by the President of the General Assembly, will be conducted during four thematic sessions, to be held on 14 and 15 June 2010. The themes of these sessions represent an effort to highlight key aspects of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, while also more broadly emphasizing the interrelated nature of the Millennium Development Goals and the international development agenda.[2]

IV. Review of the programme of work for the substantive session of the Council

A. Streamlining the programmes of work of the coordination and general segments

19. In its resolution 2009/29, the Council recognized the need for more effective consideration of the issue of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16. In response to this resolution, the Council held a number of informal consultations during spring 2010[3] on the programme of work for the substantive session of the Council. One of the objectives of the consultations was to avoid duplication and overlap between its coordination and general segments.

20. In the past, the main overlaps between the coordination and general segments of the Council have related to the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, currently considered under agenda items 4 (coordination segment), 6 (general segment) and 8 (general segment); the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, currently considered under both agenda items 4 (coordination segment) and 13 (b) (general segment); and the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, currently considered under both agenda items 4 (coordination segment) and 7 (a) (general segment).

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[2] Thematic session 1: Building a better tomorrow: local actions, national strategies and global structures; thematic session 2: Equal and inclusive partnerships: accountability in the fight against poverty; thematic session 3: Sustaining development and withstanding crises; and thematic session 4: From voice to policy: 1,660 days left.

[3] Informal consultations on the programme of work of the Council at its substantive session were held on 26 and 29 April 2010, convened by the President of the Council (Malaysia). On 21 May 2010, Member States were briefed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the content of the present report.

21. In order to streamline its programme of work, the Council decided to consider, in 2010, the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits only in its coordination segment. Hence, the general segment agenda items 6 and 8 will be considered during the coordination segment.

22. Similarly, the Council decided to consider the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in its coordination segment.

23. The Council also decided to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to General Assembly resolution 64/187 on information and communication technologies for development in the general segment under agenda item 13 (b), together with the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development which, in accordance with Council resolution 2006/46, effectively assists the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up.

24. Also, in accordance with resolution 2009/30, which called for more prominence to be given to the agenda item on financing for development in the work of the annual substantive session of the Council, agenda item 6 (a) will be considered during the coordination segment of the Council on 7 and 8 July 2010. The consideration of the item during the coordination segment will be in line with the Monterrey Consensus, which recognized that coherence and coordination of the United Nations system and all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions were central to efforts to support economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development worldwide.

25. The Council also decided to consider, in 2010, item 7 (d) on the long-term programme of support for Haiti, back-to-back with the informal joint event of the operational activities and humanitarian affairs segments entitled "From relief to recovery, lessons learned from the experience of Haiti".

26. The Council also decided to take up item 10 on regional cooperation immediately following the Council's dialogue with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions. However, due to the expected late issuance of the relevant reports, the item would need to remain in the general segment in 2010. The Council may wish to consider taking up the item in connection with the dialogue next year.

B. Further streamlining of the programme of work

27. In order to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination, the Council may wish to consider further streamlining the programmes of work of its coordination and general segments.

28. In the spirit of articles 63 and 64 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as General Assembly resolutions 45/264, 50/227 and 57/270 B, the coordination segment should be devoted to the coordination of the policies and practices of the specialized agencies, organs and organizations of the United Nations system related to the achievement of the economic and social objectives of the Organization.

29. In addition to focusing annually on a common cross-sectoral thematic issue, the Council could also consider, in its coordination segment, other cross-cutting items on its agenda that relate to system-wide coordination, namely the items on tobacco or health (under which the Council will have before it a report of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control) and on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Each item is alternately considered by the Council on a biennial basis.

V. Scope and periodicity of future reporting of the Secretary-General

30. In paragraph 39 of its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly decided to include in its annual agenda an item under which the assessment of the implementation of conference outcomes would be considered. However, this arrangement was put in place before the establishment of the annual ministerial review in 2005.

31. The resolutions of the Council under this item in recent years indicate that a comprehensive review of this information has not prompted any action-oriented directives or new substantive insights. Given the vastness of this task, a focused effort through the annual ministerial review process could be a more effective way for the Council to fulfil its overall responsibilities during the integrated conference follow-up. This approach would be consistent with the spirit of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 61/16 in particular.

32. The annual ministerial review takes an in-depth look at a chosen cross-cutting theme common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The results of the various conference follow-up processes are consolidated during the review. This is, in effect, an integrated and substantive way in which the Council can review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences and summits and their follow-up processes and assess its impact on the achievement of the goals and targets of the conferences and summits, as envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/16.

33. To continue enhancing their coordination and cooperation with the Council, the functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies, in line with relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular 57/270 B and 61/16, should continue to contribute to the annual ministerial reviews, as appropriate, for example by holding formal debates or panel discussions related to the theme of a particular review. The Chairs of the subsidiary bodies could then transmit the outcomes of such debates or panels to the Council. It would be important for the Council to continue to adopt the theme of its reviews well in advance so as to enable different actors to actively contribute to its deliberations.

34. Given that the integrated substantive review is now being pursued under the annual ministerial review process, the annual report on the integrated follow-up may add little value in the future. The question of integrated conference follow-up could be included in the report of the Secretary-General that is prepared annually for the review process. Alternatively, the Council may wish to consider the report on

integrated conference follow-up every five years so as to ensure that the consideration of a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in the integrated conference follow-up coincides with the five-year review cycle of the Millennium Development Goals. The Council may also wish to review the scope and periodicity of the report in connection with the review by the General Assembly of resolution 61/16 on strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, which will be reviewed by the Assembly at its upcoming sixty-fifth session.

VI. Recommendations

35. **Member States may wish to designate the Council as the intergovernmental mechanism that will review the implementation of the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, particularly through the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum. Member States may also wish to assess the value of holding the Development Cooperation Forum annually rather than biennially.**

36. **In order to provide a regional perspective to the deliberations of the Council, Member States may wish to decide that, in preparation for the annual ministerial reviews, regional meetings should be convened in all five regions to highlight issues of particular concern in those regions and to strengthen the link between country-level operations, regional activities and global-level discussions.**

37. **Member States may wish to acknowledge and promote the informal Special Event on Philanthropy and the Global Public Health Agenda of the Economic and Social Council in order to strengthen dialogue and partnership with the philanthropic and private communities for the purpose of accelerating progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

38. **Member States may wish to include the question of integrated conference follow-up in the report of Secretary-General prepared annually for the annual ministerial review. Alternatively, the Council may wish to consider the report on integrated conference follow-up every five years so as to ensure that the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in integrated conference follow-up coincides with the five-year review cycle of the Millennium Development Goals. The Council may also wish to review the scope and periodicity of the report in connection with the review by the General Assembly of resolution 61/16 on strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, which will be reviewed by the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.**

39. **Member States may wish to further review the agenda and programme of work for the substantive session in order to avoid duplication and overlap between its coordination and general segments when reviewing the implementation of resolution 61/16 on strengthening of the Economic and Social Council at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.**